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# THE BLUE HOUSE

*Ocho Rios' home away from home*

VISITOR ARRIVAL  
NUMBERS ARE NOT  
THE WHOLE STORY

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# The Blue House

## – posh meets peace

**Janet Silvera**

*Hospitality Jamaica Coordinator*

HERE IS no sweeter sound than singing birds and no view more alluring than an array of sun Vandas orchids accompanied by heart-shaped leaves and the youthful stems of colourful bougainvilleas.

Couple that look and feel with Bohemia yellow poinciana, which is the rarest personalised service that takes you to the apex, and food that unveils the taste buds to that gastronomic experience you must search long and wide to find.

These are just a few of the attributes that places boutique bed and breakfast The Blue House in Ocho Rios, St Ann, at the top of its game for some of the most discerning travellers who either make you or break you in their reviews of the accommodations industry online 'Bible', TripAdvisor.com.

With a mere five rooms – which includes a one-bedroom cottage that sleeps up to a family of four, to a superior room, tagged the 'Upper Room' – The Blue House could very well be Ocho Rios's biggest secret, but this is not necessarily so, having earned TripAdvisor's coveted 2012 Traveller's Choice award and earning a 9.2 point standing from Booking.com in 2015.

"We appeal to people who come to Jamaica for the real thing," says Elise Yap, who operates the bed and breakfast with her brother, self-taught chef Darryl, and mother Gloria.

Although very popular with US and Canadian visitors, The Blue House, which opened nine years

ago after Yap was wiped out financially in the United States, Europeans who have no interest in all-inclusives have been flocking to the serene family setting.

It was not always like this, Elise Yap tells **Hospitality Jamaica**. In the early days, she was forced to do 'all-you-can-eat' buffets on a Friday night to sustain the bed and breakfast facility.

Today, her faith is cemented by the success and the impact the earnings from The Blue House has afforded those in need. "God led me to do this, and it's His business" she explains, adding that God sent people to stay at her home/business, so she could build homes for those without.

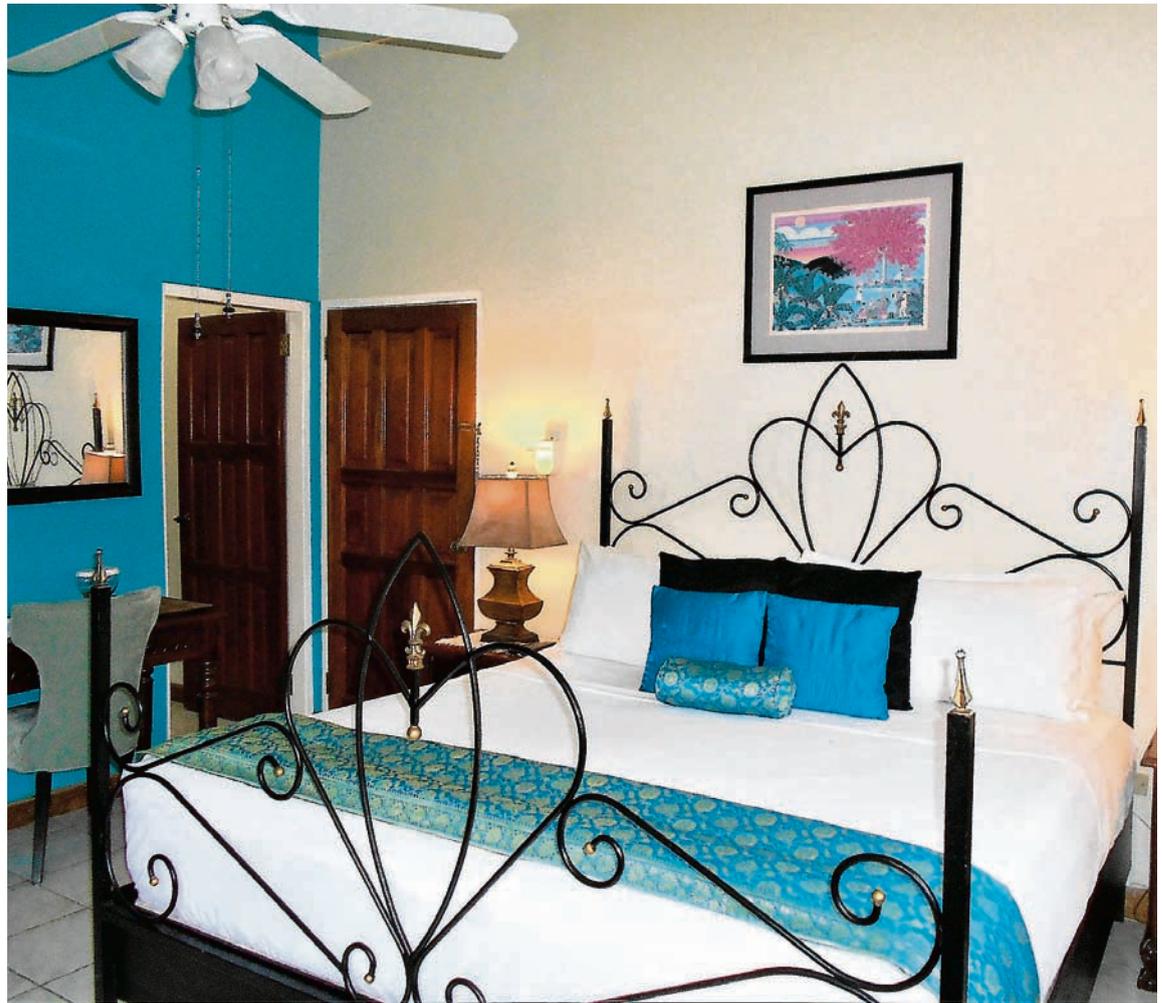
Her charity's – Bread Basket Ministries – mission is to serve the poor in Jamaica so that they can uphold their God-given dignity. And the goal, Yap says, is to alleviate human need and suffering in Ocho Rios by helping to provide the basic necessities of life to the poor, the neglected, and the marginalised.

"The interesting thing about The Blue House is God took away all of my money because he was trying to get my attention for years, but I was too busy being busy," Yap admits.

At The Blue House, no printed menu is done. Instead, food is served in a communal-style setting and is cooked with love by a bare-foot chef by the name of Darryl.

Before arriving at the fabulous bed and breakfast facility, all guests are asked their preferences and any known allergies.

"We then create meals based



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

### The Sanctuary



The Cozy Cottage outdoor shower at The Blue House in Ocho Rios, St Ann.



A vegan dish

on their choices,” says Yap. Breakfast is included in the room rate, while dinner could cost up to US\$30 per person per night.

Authentic Jamaican meals are what they pride themselves on. However, the talented and travelled chef throws in Italian, Thai, Greek, or Chinese occasionally.

Chef Darryl started cooking at age seven, and his passion is evident in the scrumptious meals he prepares.

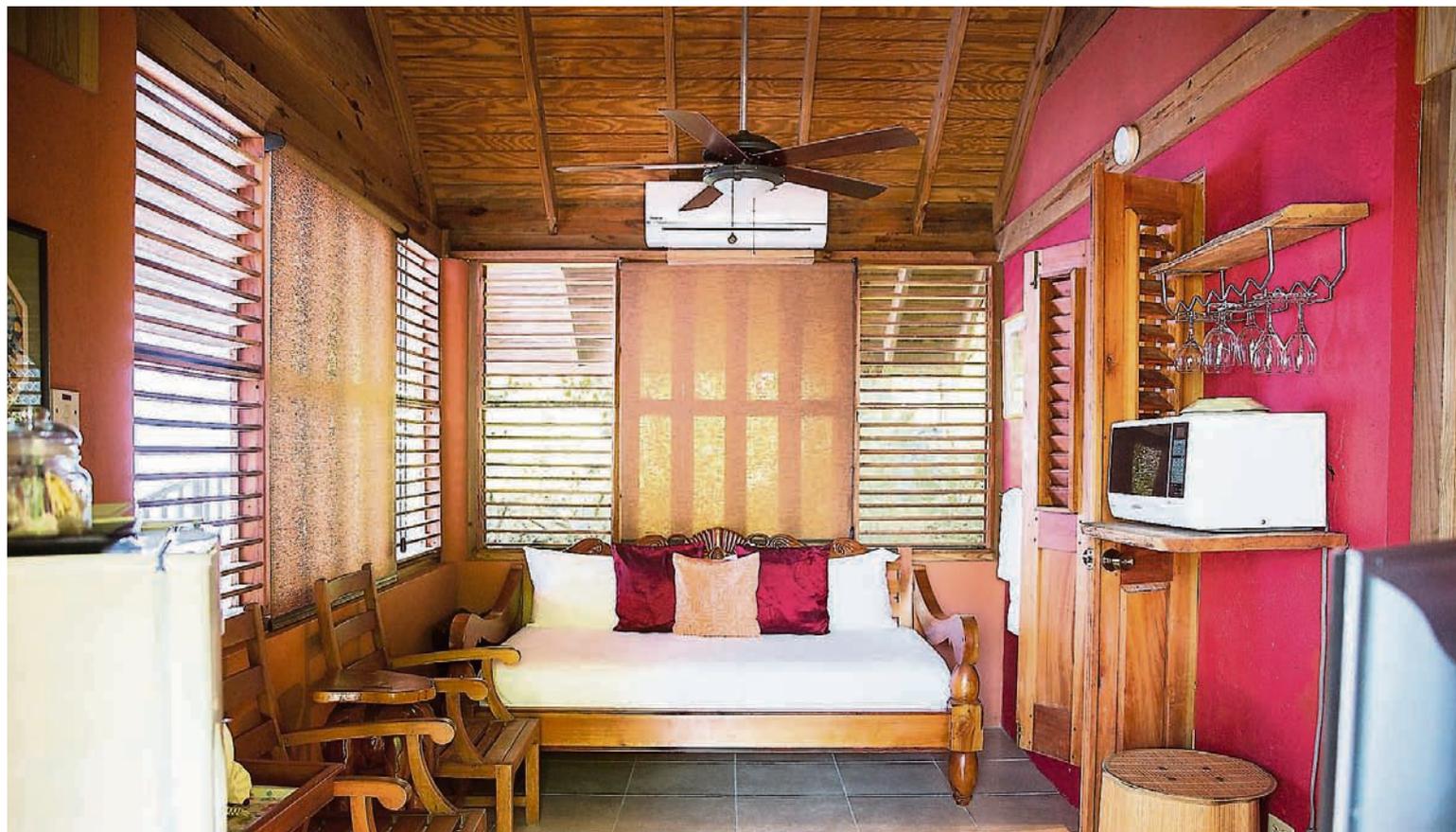
Like me, who is still in awe by the tranquillity, beauty, and service above par, those who stay at The Blue House always comment on their time spent.

Here are some taken from TripAdvisor.com

### Posh Meets Peace

“I loved the rooms at The Blue House. We reserved the family room but were upgraded to the Upper Room. I loved the elegant decor and at the same time slept so well, lulled by the sound of the raindrops on the banana tree (I think) leaves just outside the window I left open. The only thing more charming than the rooms was Elise, who is an engaging conversationalist. The food was so amazing, I proposed to Darryl in hopes that we could live out the rest of our

PLEASE SEE **HOUSE**, 4



The living room area of the Cozy Cottage.



Sitting area of The Blue House.



The Yap family (from left): Elise, her mom Gloria, and brother Darryl.



Cassava pancakes with caramelised bananas and nuts.



The foliage that makes The Blue House very special.



Grilled beef with Chimmi Churi sauce.

## HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM 3

days together in barefoot bliss.”

### Simply Perfect

“Everything was just perfect for us: the occasional dip in the pool, the ‘fighting’ hummingbirds, the views at breakfast, the Caribbean colours, the meeting and greeting of fellow worldwide travellers, the taste of Darryl’s kitchen (“that dish alone is worth the flight!” a quote from my overwhelmed brother), the smiles and early morning greet-

ings from the staff, the patience and expertise of our expert driver/guide Patrick and the wonderful insights and stories from our host Elise.”

### Trip of a Lifetime

“Amazing!!!!!! Beautiful flowers everywhere. I mean everywhere. It was always a good time to take a selfie. It was just so perfect. The private pool was overlooking loads of beautiful bougainvillea and orchids and mango trees and on and on and on with mountains and ocean as the backdrop.”

[janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com](mailto:janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com)



The Cozy Cottage bedroom.

# Eric Donaldson, Tinga Stewart set to ignite Ocho Rios Seafood Festival

**Camille Miller**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

WITH THE popular song competition not a part of the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission 2017 calendar of events, organisers of the 10th annual Ocho Rios Seafood Festival have jumped in to fill the void.

“If you are feeling nostalgic and saddened that there is no competition this year, don’t worry, as we have the remedy,” declared Mortimer Martin, media spokesperson for the Ocho Rios Seafood Festival.

“We have both Eric Donaldson and Tinga Stewart, two of the biggest names in the history of the competition, performing at the event and which should be something worth going miles to see.”

Martin noted that 2010 winner Kharusso is also booked to perform, making the Ocho Rios Seafood Festival “the true grand gala of the North Coast” going into the Emancipation and Independence holidays. He added that the event will also have its fair share of international blend with Ocho Rios-born and Sean Kingston protege Pappy V who will be flying in from Miami, Florida, to perform.

Martin further noted that plans for the event are going well and interest has grown tremendously since last year.

“The responses have been overwhelming. We now have Hah-R-Mony Entertainment as title sponsor. In addition, we also have platinum sponsor support from the Jamaica Tourist Board as well as the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport,” Martin added.

For his part, Pixely Irons, president of the St Ann Chamber of Commerce, said the resort town of Ocho Rios was preparing for what he expects to be a huge influx of visitors coming in from out of town for the event, adding that “we will



Eric Donaldson

be ready for all comers.

“As is now the norm, we do expect a large turnout of local and overseas visitors,” he said.

“This is a family-oriented event that has the blessings of the chamber as well as other civic bodies here in the Garden Parish. It is also my understanding that a strong family entertainment package will also be in the offering.”

Meanwhile, the list of entertain-

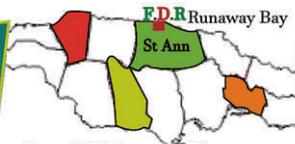
ers has grown to include Kevin Downsell, Sandra Brooks, D’Angel, Magnum Kings and Queens winner Symatic, Jimbole and the Heat Band, Zagga, Noddy Virtue and Jodian Pantry.

The Ocho Rios Seafood Festival joins a growing list of food festivals held annually across Jamaica and focuses on fish, shrimp, lobster, crab, eel, scallops and octopus, and other seafood delights.



PHOTO BY CLAUDINE HOUSEN STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tinga Stewart


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# Visitor arrival numbers are not the whole story

**David Jessop**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**T**O UNDERSTAND the Caribbean tourism economy requires time and a willingness to explore what lies behind the commentaries and headline statistics. Despite this, and tourism now being the region's most significant industry, there is an alarming absence of publicly available, viable, in-depth information on what is happening in specific markets or to the industry in the region as a whole.

This is because most Caribbean governments share only arrivals numbers and the country of origin of their visitors. Few provide any of the analysis that would determine, for example, how profitable an industry is, the demographic profile of visitors, hotel occupancy rates, the type of accommodation used, or seek to separate out arrivals that are not tourism related.

Some also confuse the issue by leaving unclear the extent to which their total arrivals numbers include lower spending cruise ship visitors,



**JESSOP**

and few say anything at all about annual or seasonal movements in key private-sector measurements such as revenue per available room (RevPar), which, by measuring occupancy and revenue, is ultimately the industry metric used to manage rates and profitability.

The most challenging example when it comes to understanding a country's tourism performance is Cuba, which has indicated surging visitor arrivals: so far up by 22.2 per cent in the first semester of 2017, with 4.2 million travellers in total forecast for the year. It provides virtually no accompanying detail

other than country of origin, or for example, figures to indicate how well the country is doing in relation to occupancy outside Havana, or about the country's repeat business or visitor satisfaction.

### **SIGNIFICANT INCREASE**

This has become especially significant as the increase in the regional arrival figures are to a significant extent now being influenced by the success of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica.

In this overall context, it was, therefore, pleasing to see a recent comment on the subject by Vincent Vanderpool Wallace, the principal partner in Bedford Baker Group, and one of the few industry professionals whose analytical and thought-provoking approach recognises that tourism's complex multi-dimensional nature requires rigorous examination.

Speaking in St Maarten, with the experience of having been a former tourism minister in The Bahamas and the CEO of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, he described

as "flawed" the method by which the countries of the region determine the economic impact of tourism.

"What we have been doing for a long time is counting heads in terms of how many people are coming to the country, which is not a good measurement of the economic impact on people," he said

Observing that this represented a form of mismanagement of tourism, he told conference participants at the 2017 Caribbean Aviation Meet-up that the industry needs to use the economic tools it now has available to measure and capture transactions so that it can guide the sector and governments to maximise the sector's economic benefits.

Governments understandably want to be able to demonstrate to their electorates that visitor numbers are increasing, but this is only a small part of the story.

A more realistic approach would be to broaden the base of reporting on tourism to consider the amount retained by individual nations through taxes; to be more aware of

the inputs and services the industry uses; report on product pricing; consider the impact of exchange rate fluctuations; and forecast the implications of changes in the economic strength of feeder markets.

There is also the need to better differentiate or explain changes in arrivals. For example, there is evidence that some of the 'tourism' recorded in the Dutch Antilles, Trinidad, and other parts of the region is fictitious in the sense that it reflects Venezuelans coming to buy basic necessities, collect foreign currency, or as refugees.

There is also a problem when it comes to recording Chinese visitors. Although their arrival numbers have been increasing, the probability is that given the absence of same-plane air services from China to anywhere in the region other than Cuba, these visitors are not tourists, but those who are developing or working on the huge projects that China is now engaged in around the region.

I note this not to be critical of the messaging about what is largely positive regional news about the likelihood of a record year for tourism, but to suggest that there is a strong case for the better research and for the publication of more comprehensive tourism statistics and analysis to assist decision making and to enable more thoughtful media questions.

Visitor arrivals numbers are not the whole story.

high tide



low tide

Relax responsibly!





# Hope Zoo

## offers something for the entire family

Sashana Small and Lalara Boodie  
Hospitality Jamaica Writer

EXPERIENCE THE absolute serenity of being among some of Jamaica's most exotic animals at the Hope Zoo in Kingston.

A visit to the Hope Zoo, according to Managing Director Rebecca Harper, is no ordinary experience. "We create memories here, and all of our activities keep in mind family, team, adventure, and entertainment."

Families are able to create and strengthen bonds, which, she stated, is ultimately what Hope Zoo is about. "It also provides a way for people to meet in a family-oriented environment," she continued.

First opened to the public in 1961, the aim was to exhibit a wide variety of animals. However, inadequate funding and consequent loss of the animal collection led to its overall deterioration and, subsequently a loss of public interest.

The leasing of the facility by the Central Government to the Hope Zoo Preservation Foundation (HZPF) in 2011 saw a dramatic turn for the facility.

### Improving the zoo for a better experience

Today, Hope Zoo is the home of 900 animals from 60 different species, including indigenous, endangered, and endemic animals from Jamaica, Africa, and the Americas. These animals include tortoises, monkeys, zebras, macaws, flamingos, ostriches, and the zoo's pride - Lucas the lion, and Jasmin the lioness. "Hope Zoo is now the cleanest, family-oriented venue in Jamaica. Our programmes are focused on family wellness, environmental wellness, and animal wellness," said Harper.

It is now an ideal spot for a family outing, a place to create fun memories with friends, or even a place for couples who want to spend some quiet family time together. Have a picnic, reunion and bond over the many games and activities that are offered. These activities



PHOTOS BY CONTRIBUTED  
Serengeti Bistro is open from Thursday to Saturday and is a great place to lyme with family and friends.



See the live band perform every Thursday at the Serengeti Bistro.



There is a lot of space for kids to play at the zoo. There is also the option for a Family camp night on Saturday which cost \$2,000.

bistro which is food, drink and entertainment," said Harper. The Serengeti Bistro has its own personal live band known as The Indigenous.

### More features for the kids

The zoo also offers kid 'night-out on Fridays. Parents are given the chance to spend time at the bistro while their kids are entertained in a Guardsman-secured tree house until midnight. "We have movie night, and arts and craft. We give them their own set of entertainment away from the zoo," said Harper. This package is \$2,000 per child and includes food and entertainment. "Every Saturday night, we offer our camp out with a minimum of 10 tents booked. You can bring your friends and say, let's go camping at the zoo."

Only Thursday nights are adult-oriented. Every other night is dedicated to building family bonds.

For more information or to book a tour, contact the zoo at 927-1085. Email them at [guestrelationshopezoo@yahoo.com](mailto:guestrelationshopezoo@yahoo.com) or you can check out their Facebook page @hopezoo, or visit their website: [hopezookingston.com](http://hopezookingston.com).



This is an ideal spot for a family outing.

# JTB wins 2017 TravelAge West WAVE Award

**T**HE JAMAICA Tourist Board (JTB) is celebrating its most recent accolade, the 2017 TravelAge West WAVE Award in the category of 'International Tourism Board Providing the Best Travel Agent Support', which was presented at the TravelAge West WAVE Western Agents' Votes of Excellence Awards on June 15 in Marina Del Rey, California.

Other tourism board nominees in the category included Tourism Australia, Mexico Tourism Board, New Zealand Tourism Board and Tahiti Tourism.

"We at the Jamaica Tourist Board are thrilled to accept the 2017 TravelAge West WAVE Award for the sixth year!" said Dian Holland, JTB business development manager – West USA. "The victory is that much sweeter because of the other world-class destinations we were up against. We strive to always provide our travel agents with the tools and resources they need to succeed and this award is a reflection of our dedication."

More than 150 companies, individuals and destinations were celebrated by the readers of **TravelAge West** at the WAVE Awards ceremony. Honorees were recognised in 68 categories that spanned the cruise, tour operator, airline, hotel and



CONTRIBUTED

Dian Holland (centre), with Carlos and Lili Varona of Victory Travel and Tours.

resort, rail vacation, travel insurance, destination and education travel fields. The annual awards gave travel agents in the Western US the opportunity to recognise the outstanding qualities and services of their travel supplier partners.

Travel agent professionals throughout the 15 Western states and readers of **TravelAge**

**West** were invited to vote on the best-of-the-best from a list of Editor's Pick award recipients that were chosen after careful review by **TravelAge West** editor-in-chief Kenneth Shapiro and the editorial team of **TravelAge West**. Review methods included product analysis, on-site visits, a survey of a select group of travel agents and online research.



CONTRIBUTED

Dian Holland (left) with Sharon Little of Wedding and Honeymoon Travel Group.

## Jamaica to host 2018 Annual Kiwanis Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District Convention

JAMAICA WAS announced as the host destination for the 2018 Annual Kiwanis Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District Convention at the 2017 conference, held recently in Ottawa, Canada. Representatives from the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) were at the convention in Ottawa for the announcement. Approximately 450 Kiwanians attended this year's convention, including 70 delegates from Jamaica.

"We are thrilled to be the host destination for the Kiwanis Eastern Canada and Caribbean District Convention in Jamaica in 2018," said Marcia McLaughlin, deputy

director of tourism, marketing. "This will be a great opportunity for us to showcase the amenities at the Montego Bay Convention Centre and our unmistakable Jamaican hospitality to this diverse group of delegates."

The Eastern Canada and Caribbean District of Kiwanis is one of the largest and most diverse of the 50 districts that comprise the Kiwanis family, stretching from Ontario to Newfoundland in the north, and extending down

# JAMAICA

## TOURIST BOARD



CONTRIBUTED

Louise Paquette (left), the Jamaica Tourist Board's business development manager, with Jamaican delegates and well-wishers following the announcement that Jamaica will be the host destination for the 2018 Kiwanis Club's Eastern Canada and Caribbean District Convention.

through the Caribbean, from The Bahamas to Suriname. The Montego Bay Kiwanis was instrumental in bringing this conference to Jamaica in 2018, with the Jamaica Tourist Board's business development manager, Louise Paquette, helping to promote the 2018 event at this year's convention.

The 2018 convention in Jamaica is set for May 2018. The JTB Canada team will be promoting the convention to the Kiwanis membership over the coming months to capitalise on this opportunity and bring as many delegates as possible to experience Destination Jamaica.

# BA announces partnership with The White Company

BRITISH AIRWAYS (BA) has announced plans to give customers a great night's sleep in the sky through a partnership with the luxury lifestyle brand, The White Company.

The iconic British retailer will supply bedding and amenity kits in Club World as part of the airline's £400m customer investment plan, with a focus on excellence in the premium cabins and more choice and quality for all.

Later this year, customers travelling in Club World between Heathrow and New York's JFK will be given a new, elegant day cushion, which will double up as a fantastic lumbar support when working or relaxing on board.

Exclusively for British Airways, The White Company has also designed a bespoke, luxuriously soft, large pillow and white cotton pillowcase to enhance customers' comfort and to help them sleep well in the sky.

Customers will also be given a super-soft woven blanket with satin trim and a specially developed luxury duvet to improve their quality of sleep, as well as a padded mattress cover giving an extra layer of comfort. The new bedding from The White Company will then be gradually rolled out across British Airways' other long-haul routes.

## TOUCH OF LUXURY

The new Club World amenity kits come in an elegantly designed bag from The White Company and contain products from the retailer's 'Restore & Relax Spa Collection', as well as a super-soft jersey eye-mask, offering a further touch of luxury in the sky.

Alex Cruz, British Airways' chairman and CEO, said: "Our investment in Club World has started and we're kicking off by helping our customers sleep even better in the skies. Partnering with The White Company, another quintessentially British brand renowned for quality and style, is the first step in a multimillion-pound investment for our premium customers."

Chrissie Rucker, founder of The White Company, said: "We are passionate about creating the best night's sleep for all our customers and I'm truly delighted to now be working with British Airways to 'sleep well in the sky'. I hope you love the result as much as we do."

The White Company opened its first international flagship store in New York last month at 155 Fifth Avenue in the city's Flatiron district.

British Airways is also introducing a number of measures on board to maximise available shut-eye time for customers in Club World. Breakfast cards will also be given out so customers can select if they wish to be woken for breakfast and if so, what they would like.

In autumn, a new restaurant-style premium dining service will begin in Club World, with display trolleys allowing customers to select dishes from a choice of freshly prepared starters and desserts served on beautiful, new table settings.

## PART ONE

# Abe Issa: The realist

**Diana McIntyre-Pike**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

(With extracts from *Spotlight Magazine*, May 1955)

**W**HEN THE late Abe Issa was appointed chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) in 1955, it was at a time when the JTB was reorganised from being the Jamaica Tourist Trade Development Board.

That name was coined "in an age when ornate trimmings and trappings were the vogue and tourism a post-war baby" according to the *Spotlight Magazine* in May 1955 report. The new tourist board name is "new, stripped-down – as it rolls over the tongue it spells out action, purpose, business with accent on the BIZ".

Abe Issa was described as "the realist" as he was the best man to paint the picture that was waiting to come to life. It was felt that he was the only man in Jamaica that knew what the ingredients were, where they were, and what it took to bring them together on the canvas of realism. Everyone knew that Abe didn't deal with fantasies. He was known as a man that made millions by buying factual things, repackaging them in glamorous wrappings, and reselling them with zestful dash and skilful daring. He was also a "big thinker, planner and doer".

Abe was the man Jamaica picked in April 1955 to supply new "spark plugs to the tourist trade" that during the last 15 years had gradually bogged down to its



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Diana McIntyre-Pike

axle; bogged in nearsighted and unimaginable planning and promotion; bogged down because of the overall lack of top-level direction and forceful salesmanship at home and abroad; bogged down in negative psychological approach in which opportunities have been seen as insurmountable obstacles.

Restless, handsome Abe led an equally hard-driving 20-member board with a 10-man executive committee – each member represented some vital, directly participating section of the tourist business - each were in Grade-A success in his own business. The new board recognised that the money spent on advertising was an investment and that it paid for itself many times over, even if the market fluctuated.

At that time, Nassau and The Bahamas



Abe Issa

were making fabulous sums out of this invisible sun, sea, beaches and scenery, and it was their only industry. Abe's comment about this was "What have they got that we haven't got much more of to offer the tourist? We have the same sun, scenery, and we could lend them some. I'll tell you what they have: A more wide-awake and business-like approach. They spend big money on promotion and advertising to make big money. They spend consistently and expertly. They literally clear the decks at home to promote tourism abroad. We have been sleeping here - SLEEPING!"

Diana McIntyre-Pike is president/founder of the Countrystyle Community Tourism Network/Villages as Businesses. Email: [villagesasbusinesses@yahoo.com](mailto:villagesasbusinesses@yahoo.com)

## ROYAL SUITES AT GRAND PALLADIUM



CONTRIBUTED

An artist impression of the new TRS Hotels, formerly the Royal Suites at Grand Palladium.

# Culture minister pushes for heritage tourism

**Paul H Williams**

*Hospitality Jamaica Writer*

**T**HE MINISTRY of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Olivia ‘Babsy’ Grange is to work closely with the various communities and organisations to promote more adept marketing and public relations, as well as greater inter-agency collaboration, such as with tourism.

Grange made the announcement, during her keynote address on Quao Day, Friday, June 23, the second day of the ninth Charles Town International Maroon Conference in Portland.

She spoke to an audience that included scholars and visitors from abroad, who had descended upon the windward Maroon village to discuss Maroon-related topics and to immerse themselves into the culture.

Charles Town is one of the communities

within the Blue and John Crow Mountains UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Grange said her ministry is working closely with those communities to ensure that they “benefit economically from their heritage.

“In the case of Charles Town and Quao Day, there is need to engage culture and heritage tourism through the empowering of the communities to create relevant and meaningful products for merchandising, while ensuring that the integrity of the culture is sustained. This relates to the creation of heritage trails, re-enactments, drum and dance festivals and spaces for educational engagements,” Minister Grange said.

Another space that the minister said her ministry is working to preserve, because of its significant heritage value, is the Taino site at White Marl in St Catherine. With work going on in earnest on the expansion of the Mandela



PHOTO BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Minister of Culture Olivia Grange (left) showing Maroon dancer Tajay McLeod that she, too, can move.



Patrons could not get enough of the creative wit and engaging presentations of poet and DJ InSense.



From left: The powerful trio of Gaa'man Gloria Simms of Jamaica, Akila Jarmorgi of Trinidad and Fidelia Graand-Galon of Suriname were panellists on the last day of the recent 2017 Charles Town International Maroon Conference in Portland.

Highway from Six Miles in St Andrew to the Old Harbour Road roundabout in St Catherine, there are concerns in many quarters over the threat that expansion might pose to the preservation of the White Marl Taino site.

It is one of the most significant Taino sites in the Western Hemisphere, where there is a rich trove of Taino artefacts embedded within the land. But fears that the integrity of the site might be compromised for the sake of development were allayed, perhaps, when Minister Grange said the developers will have to build the road around the site and not through it.

“As minister, I ensured that the Jamaica National Heritage Trust was involved ... And so we decided that at White Marl ... where they are going to cut the road through ... we are going to see what is there before they can touch it,” she revealed.

The site is widely regarded as sacred Taino territory, and Grange recounted how rain came just when a zemi with a tear etched on its face was unearthed during an excavation process.

Zemis are miniature sculptures said to be possessed by deities or ancestral spirits. They were an integral part of the social and religious lifestyles of the Tainos whose lives, in Jamaica, were literally turned upside down after the Spaniards, led by Christopher Columbus, arrived on the island in 1494.

To escape onslaught and enslavement, many Tainos fled to the inlands and the mountains where they continued to carry out their pre-Columbus lifestyles. They were later joined by runaway Africans. Together they lived and interbred, but it is the resilience of the African Maroons that seems to have withstood the test of time.



Dr Marcus Goffe presenting a paper on ganja at the recent Charles Town International Maroon Conference.



Taino elder Naniki-Reyes Ocasio from Puerto Rico speaking at the recent Charles Town International Maroon Conference in Portland.



In between the academic presentations, there was much drumming at the recent Charles Town International Maroon Conference.



Some members of the Accompong Town delegation from St Elizabeth as they enter the Asafu Yard at Charles Town, Portland, for Ancestors Day celebrations on Sunday, June 24.



## **Golden shoes, golden hats and ginger puss on Golden Hill**

PHOTOS BY PAUL H. WILLIAMS

Side by side in a golden parade.

**L**IKE THEM or not, revivalists do know how to have a good time in their worship spaces. Their services are energetic and fervent, and when it comes to dancing in church, they have absolutely no inhibitions.

The trumping, the wheeling, the whirling, the side rocks and the flailing of hands create a piece of dance theatre that no rehearsed choreography can replicate.

The peculiarities and nuances of the Revival Church in Jamaica has made it not only a worship space, but also a rich cultural outpouring that represents and retains the spirituality of Africans who were brought here in a context of servitude.

I am not revivalist myself, and my love for Revival worship spaces has to do with nothing but the high entertainment value that they possess. For revival people are ritualistic, stylish, dramatic and comedic – theatrical, if you will.

So recently, when I was invited to the Apostolic Sabbath Church at Golden Hill, I was expecting nothing less. It was my second visit.

The community of Golden Hill perches on a narrow ridge in west rural St Andrew. From it, other ridges can be seen across expansive valleys. All around, the vegetation is green and luxuriant, green gold on Golden Hill, perhaps. Everything was so alive and fresh – nothing dried up – and looked like gold.

But, I was wrong. While I was waiting for the service to



Which hat is the hottest?

start I saw a few people, including young men, wearing golden shoes, and women in golden hats. OK, so those were some members of the choir.

More people arrived, more golden hats and shoes. This choir can't be so big, so I went up to the church to see what was going on. More gold. The attire for the occasion of the appreciation and honour of Bishop O'Neil Miller was white clothes accessorised with golden shoes, ties and hats.

One by one the ladies came in, and I, who really do not care about what people wear, was drawn into this game of let's see what the other arrivals will turn up in.

The service, as usual, was filled with the expected spirited singing, drumming and dancing. Yet, it was the gold that was entertaining me. Dancing golden shoes of various sizes and styles rocked the tiles. Stilettos stabbed near tilting platforms, while flats tried to out-dance pumps, and lost.

And the hats, too, from the rich, flamboyant ones to the dull and understated, were all telling stories of the tastes and styles of the worshippers.

The service lasted for over three hours, and I enjoyed every moment of it, gold or no gold. It was also a golden moment for the pastor, Bishop O'Neil Miller, who was bestowed with a certificate of appreciation and doctorate, shortly after his head was anointed with golden-colour olive oil.



Somebody clearly did not get the Whatsapp reminder.



Of folds and gold.



And the winner of the hat of the evening goes to....



Bishop Dr O'Neil Miller outdid himself with these interest pieces.



While they stand praying the ginger puss is pulling a bag from off the bench.



Golden shoes, golden hats and golden voices.

# CTO, CDB to help tourism sector combat impact of climate change

**T**HE CARIBBEAN Tourism Organisation (CTO) has received a €460,000 grant from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to implement a project to increase the Caribbean tourism sector's resilience to natural hazards and climate-related risks.

"Global climate change and its impacts, including the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, pose a significant risk to the Caribbean region and threaten the sustainability of Caribbean tourism. The CTO is pleased to have the support of the CDB to implement this project, which will contribute to enhancing the resiliency, sustainability and competitiveness of the region's tourism sector. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk-management strategies in tourism development and planning is our duty to our member countries," CTO Secretary General Hugh Riley said.

The CDB-CTO partnership was formalised at a signing ceremony held on June 22, 2017, at CDB's headquarters in Barbados. Speaking at the event, CDB President Dr Warren Smith noted that the tourism sector makes an enormous contribution to the region's socio-economic development.

"Tourism generates high levels of employment, foreign direct investment and foreign exchange for our borrowing member countries and, given its multisectoral nature, it is a very effective tool for promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction. However, maintaining this critical role calls for adequate safeguards to be erected against the enormous threats that climate change and natural hazards pose to the sustainability of our region," said Dr Smith.

Funding is being provided under the African Caribbean Pacific-European Union-Caribbean Development Bank-Natural Disaster Risk Management in CARIFORUM



Hugh Riley

Countries programme, which aims to reduce vulnerability to long-term impacts of natural hazards, including the potential impacts of climate change, thereby achieving national and regional sustainable development and poverty reduction goals in those countries.

## POLICY FORMATION

During the 19-month project implementation period, the CTO will support the region's tourism entities with policy formulation, the promotion of best practices in disaster risk management and climate-change adaptation, and the development of tools to enhance the tourism sector's knowledge and awareness of disaster risk-reduction strategies and the potential impacts of climate variability and climate change (CVC).

A training component will also be included to strengthen the ability of public- and private-sector tourism stakeholders to undertake adequate mitigation and adaptation actions to CVC. The CTO secretariat will also benefit from institutional strengthening to help provide technical assistance and ongoing support for tourism-related climate services.

The project is in keeping with 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, which has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly.



CONTRIBUTED

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett addresses tourism stakeholders in Kingston recently on the tourism workers' pension scheme, which is expected to go to tender soon. The fund is expected to benefit some 90,000 persons employed in the tourism industry and will be bolstered by \$1 billion being provided by the Tourism Enhancement Fund over a five-year period. The meeting, which took place at the Courtleigh Hotel & Suites, New Kingston, marks the second in a series of stakeholder consultations being held before the programme is implemented.

# Brits change travel trend due to fear of terrorism

ONE-THIRD OF British holiday-makers have changed their travel plans due to the fear of terrorism, according to the latest research by World Travel Market (WTM) London, the leading global event for the travel industry.

A poll of more than 2,000 British holidaymakers found that 17 per cent are avoiding countries where the terror threat is high, and 12 per cent are avoiding countries where there has already been a terrorist attack.

Almost one-fifth of Brits (16 per cent) are so worried about the threat of terrorism they refuse to travel and have even cancelled holidays.

With the safety and security of a destination as one of, or the most important factors when deciding where to travel, holidaymakers (58

per cent) think there is still a distinct lack of travel advice on where is safe to go and don't believe there is enough information out there.

More than half of the respondents (55 per cent) stated that terrorism had not impacted their willingness to travel. However, it is possible that it still affected their choice of destination, with many holidaymakers opting for the "safer" destinations after bookings to Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal saw a spike in the first half of 2017.

World Travel Market spokesperson Paul Nelson, commented:

"With most capital cities on high alert, it's hardly surprising that we are more cautious in our decision when it comes to holidays.

However, with Brits having such a

strong desire to travel, I think it's unlikely terrorism threats will be too detrimental to the resilient travel industry."

The Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) has categorised many European destinations into level of terror threat, listing those of high threat, general threat, underlying threat, and shining a light on those countries with very low risk.

It's likely that this fear shared by one-third of Brits will make way for new holiday hotspots such as Malta, Slovenia and Iceland that are considered a 'low-risk, safe' option by the FCO.

World Travel Market London is the event where the industry conducts its business deals. Almost £3 billion in business contracts are agreed at WTM London, which takes place every November. These contracts are the holidays consumers purchase the following year.

More than 51,000 senior industry executives attend WTM London every year, conducting around one million meetings, which lead to almost £3 billion in business deals.